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HIGHER EDUCATION SCHOOL FINANCE INEQUITY AND INADEQUACY IN VIRGINIA

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Democratically controlled legislature and Democratic governor have increased total funding for Virginia's public universities markedly over the past three years, but the Commonwealth still has an irrational, inequitable, and unjust public higher education finance system in need of reform. Even with a significant increase in state investment for the most recent fiscal year, public support for Virginia higher education has not kept up with rising costs and an expanded pool of students, leading to not just higher tuition and fees for students and families, but some of the highest tuition and fee levels in the country and ever rising student loan debt, particularly for working-class, low-income, and racial minority students.

The findings summarized below and detailed in this paper track those of our prior brief, *Scratching the Surface*, which describe a system of higher education in Virginia that is segregated on a *de facto* basis by class and race. It is incumbent for Virginia state leaders to not just increase higher education funding overall, but to do so in a way that furthers equitable state finance of and access to quality public colleges and universities. As federal officials, especially those from Virginia, and advocates in the Commonwealth and beyond likewise consider major new investments in higher education as per President Biden's latest budget proposal, it is incumbent on them to do the same – further equitable state finance of and access to quality public colleges and universities.

Hidden Distribution Decisions & High Levels of Higher Ed School Finance Inequity

- Virginia does not have a transparent, consistent funding formula for state support to public institutions of higher education linked to institution need, access, affordability, or success.
- The Commonwealth provides 68% more in state funding to public four-year colleges than it does to two-year community colleges per full-time equivalent student.
- Wealthy, public four-year colleges like William & Mary receive more state funding per student annually than Old Dominion and George Mason, which serve a much more racially and socioeconomically diverse student body.

Scarce Public Dollars Directed to the Wealthy & Dubious Private Schools

- Virginia spends close to \$70 million per year on the Virginia Tuition Assistance Grant (VTAG) program for those attending private four-year colleges. VTAG funds are disconnected from family financial need and support private institutions where not even half of undergraduates earn a degree.
- More students from upper-income families earning over \$100,000 a year benefit from VTAG than students from hard-pressed middle-income families with incomes between \$50,000 and \$100,000. In fact, through VTAG each year, approximately \$10 million in Virginia college financial aid goes to families with zero demonstrated financial need.
- Liberty University, which is arguably one of the worst non-profit private colleges in the country for poor and minority students in terms of affordability and completion, is the largest recipient of

VTAG funding by a factor of four. Liberty University alone received almost \$17 million in VTAG funds in 2019 (25% of the total VTAG funds Virginia dispensed to undergraduates) despite having a Black student graduation rate of just 17%.

Exceptionally Low Investment in Public Higher Education

- Not only is Virginia not leveling up higher education school finance equity, until the recent Democratic takeover of the state legislature, it had been slowly divesting from public higher education. In 2001, Virginia students paid just 23% of the cost of public higher education and the state paid 77%. In 2019, students covered 52% and the state just 48%.
- Even after increased total investment during the tenures of Governors McAuliffe and Northam, as of 2020 Virginia still ranked 44th in the nation in state funding for two-year colleges per full-time equivalent student.
- Virginia's public four-year comprehensive and research institutions have the 3rd and 7th highest tuition and fee levels in the nation, respectively.
- On an inflation adjusted basis, Virginia's per pupil contribution to public higher education has been relatively flat for the last decade and remains smaller than it was in 2009 for four-year institutions.

Elevated & Rising Student Debt Levels

- Some 57% of Virginia postsecondary education graduates from public four-year colleges leave with student loan debt and a quarter owe more than \$50,000.

- At Virginia's two public HBCUs, approximately 90% of graduates leave with student loan debt. Half of them owe more than \$40,000. In contrast at the state's two wealthiest and most selective public universities, each of which receive sizable financial support from the Commonwealth of Virginia, barely a third of students graduate with debt and median debt is \$15,000 less than at the HBCUs.
- In 1992, just 29% of Virginia residents took out loans to attend a public college, but in 2018, 51% did. The amount individuals borrowed almost doubled in inflation-adjusted dollars. The portion of community college students who take out loans increased more than five times.

Our first report examined student demographics and enrollment trends at Virginia public and private colleges individually, compared to each other, and compared to national levels and peer institutions in other states.

This paper is the second in a series making up a full report on Virginia's small 'c' conservative commitment to diversity and socioeconomic mobility through higher education. Here, we focus on college affordability and financial aid.

INTRODUCTION

Few states loom as large in the history of public education as Virginia. More than two centuries ago, Thomas Jefferson’s “Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge” argued that because an educated citizenry was essential to successful democracy it should be “educated at the common expense of all” without regard to “wealth, birth or other accidental condition or circumstance.”¹ Even though today we would reject Jefferson’s understanding of who constituted the citizenry, his is still a commendable, high ideal that went on to guide the creation of the University of Virginia and shaped the American understanding of higher education as not just a finishing school for the elite, but as an engine of democracy, freedom, and socioeconomic mobility.

Over the past twenty-five years that engine has stalled in Virginia.

The Commonwealth has slowly privatized higher education by failing to maintain funding for its public institutions. The funding it does provide for higher education is not supplied in a systematic and transparent manner emphasizing equity or accountability. And it runs a regressive financial aid program that sends millions of dollars to private colleges and universities that too often fail to deliver an adequate return on the taxpayers’ investment.

All this adds up to high tuition, increased student loan debt, and declining college affordability for low-income, working class, and hard-pressed middle class Virginia residents.

A meaningful commitment to socioeconomic opportunity and diversity in higher education entails a commitment to college affordability as well intentional recruitment and fair admission policies. It does little good to increase recruitment of underrepresented minorities or low-income students if an institution is not affordable. Conversely, enrolling high

numbers of underrepresented students only to have them drop out or graduate with crippling student loan debt deeply impairs the power of higher education to elevate one's economic standing. The data indicate Virginia needs to address multiple college affordability issues.

Virginia Funds Higher Education Inequitably

The large differences in net price (i.e. out-of-pocket price after all grant aid is conferred) and student debt among Virginia's public universities point to a more fundamental issue in the Commonwealth's higher education system. There are large inequities in how the state funds higher education. In fact, Virginia does not even have a public higher education funding formula that can be said to drive equity and infuse a degree of accountability.

Aggregate state appropriations for community colleges have returned to 2009 levels in Virginia, but there remains a large gap in state funding per pupil between two- and four-year public colleges. Virginia four-year colleges receive 68% more per full-time equivalent (FTE) student than two-year institutions, even though community colleges have less institutional wealth and serve students with much greater need (see figure 1).

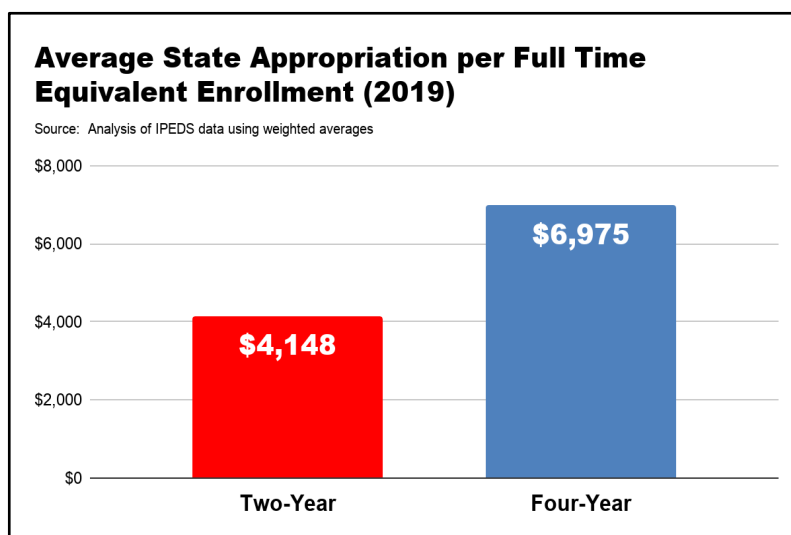


Figure 1

William & Mary University, with its nearly \$1 billion endowment, and the Virginia Military Institute (VMI), with a \$540 million endowment, receive more than twice as much per FTE student than many community colleges in the state.² Two-year institutions in the Commonwealth, almost without exception, serve low-income students and Black students at a much higher rate than either William & Mary or VMI (see figure 2).³

Institution Name	State Appropriation per FTE Student (2019)	Pell Enrollment (2018)	Black Enrollment (2018)
William & Mary	\$ 8,464	11.6%	7.2%
Virginia Military Institute	\$ 8,015	13.9%	6.2%
Lord Fairfax Community College	\$ 3,988	20.6%	4.0%
Piedmont Virginia Community College	\$ 4,505	22.0%	12.5%
Tidewater Community College	\$ 3,677	39.0%	31.0%

Source: Analysis of IPEDS Data 2016-18.

Figure 2

Among four-year universities, state appropriations are unevenly distributed and appear to follow no clear logic. While it is good to see institutions with larger Pell Grant recipient shares receiving more funding than those that enroll a smaller portion of low-income students in most cases, it is still notable that the Commonwealth’s two HBCUs enroll the largest shares of Pell Grant students but do not receive the largest appropriation per full-time equivalent student (see figure 3).

- George Mason enrolls Pell Grant students at more than twice the rate that the University of Virginia and is much more racially and ethnically

diverse, but it gets the smallest per FTE pupil state appropriation in the Commonwealth among four-year colleges.

- Virginia Military Institute gets the sixth largest state per pupil appropriation and William & Mary gets the fifth largest, even though both institutions have huge endowments and rank among the worst 11 public universities *in the country* in terms of Pell Grant student enrollment rate.

State Appropriations per FTE for 4-Year Public Universities (2019) and 3 year average Pell enrollment share (2018)

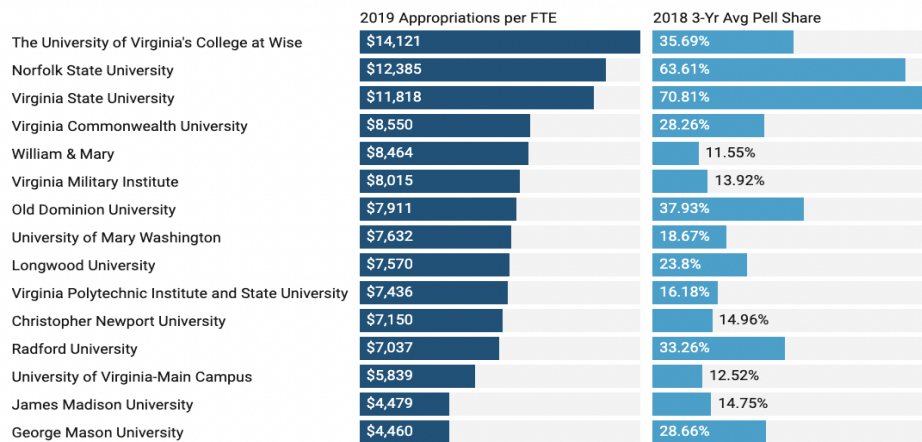


Chart: ERN • Source: IPEDS • [Get the data](#) • Created with [Datawrapper](#)

Figure 3

A more rational and equity-minded approach to funding higher education in the Commonwealth would direct appropriations to the institutions that enroll greater shares of low-income and working-class students as well as under-represented minorities. It would reward institutions that improve outcomes for these and all students as reflected in graduation rates overall and among disaggregated subgroups. It would reward reduction of enrollment and completion gaps between wealthy students and white students as compared to those who are not. It would take into consideration institutional wealth and success.

And it would support improved academic preparation at the secondary school level so that students are better able to complete their postsecondary education studies in a timely fashion.

Virginia has no such approach, although some equity measures are proposed in SCHEV's Virginia Plan for Higher Education.⁴ Currently, Virginia's distribution of state higher education funding prioritizes faculty-student ratios, instruction and support services, and faculty salaries.⁵ It sets a goal that "the percentage of the cost of education for Virginia students enrolled at an institution to be funded from state general funds is the same for each institution." But Virginia does not actually do that (see figures 2, 3). Moreover, equal funding is bad funding when it comes to higher education. Virginia's two- and four-year colleges need *equitable* funding; that is higher funding for those with higher needs, and a formula that guarantees it.

Virginia Misdirects Financial Aid to the Wealthy & Dubious Private Schools

Inefficiency and inequity also bedevil one of Virginia's largest student grant aid programs. One way states blunt the impact of declining overall state investment in higher education and rising tuition and fees on hard-pressed families is to increase state grant aid to needy students. Virginia has many aid programs, but the largest are two need-based programs for public institutions and one disconnected from need for private colleges.

- 1) The Virginia Commonwealth Award and the Virginia Guaranteed Assistance Program (VGAP) are side-by-side, need-based grant programs for residents enrolled in an undergraduate program at in-state, public two- or four-year institutions. VGAP recipients must have at least a 2.5 GPA in high school, enroll full-time in college, and maintain a 2.0 GPA. The average Virginia Commonwealth/VGAP Award was \$2,752 in 2018. In 2020, the total funding for both programs was \$249 million.⁶
- 2) The Virginia Tuition Assistance Grant Program (VTAG) is a non-need *and* non-academic merit based grant for undergraduate and graduate students who are Virginia residents attending private, non-profit four-year institutions in Virginia (96% of the funds go to undergraduates).⁷ The average VTAG award was \$3,066 in 2018. In 2020, the total funding for VTAG was \$71 million.⁸
- 3) Because VTAG is not based on need and simply distributed to students who complete the application (meaning it is not even a so-

called “merit” program), millions of taxpayer dollars each year go to students who do not need financial assistance, particularly since highly-resourced students are more likely to be advised to fill out the application.⁹ More students from families earning over \$100,000 a year end up with a larger share of VTAG financial aid than students from working-class and middle-income families with income between \$50,000 and \$100,000 in 2018 (see figure 4).

Distribution of VA Tuition Assistance Grants by Income

Source: VA DOE, SCHEV FA01 Report, 2018-19



Chart: ERN • Created with Datawrapper

Figure 4

Almost 16% of the students who received VTAG funding in 2018 (3,269 students in total) qualified for no financial aid or did not even bother applying for federal financial aid (see figure 5). Each year, approximately \$10 million in Virginia state college aid goes to families with zero demonstrated financial need and zero indication of heightened academic merit.

Financial Aid Status of Students Who Received VTAG (2018)

Source: VA DOE (2018). Financial Need is determined by a Federal Formula that Subtracts the Expected Family Contribution from the Cost of Attendance.

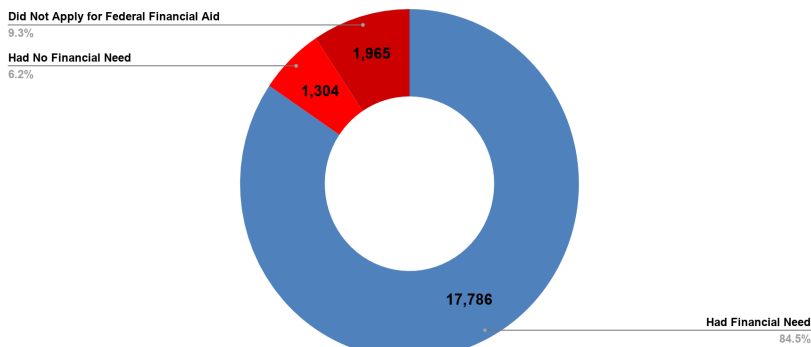


Figure 5

Moreover, VTAG funding is provided to a number of private colleges with poor student outcomes. Nine private colleges (37.5% of all such Virginia institutions) that get VTAG funds have graduation rates below 50% (see figure 6).¹⁰ Liberty University is the largest recipient of VTAG funding by a factor of four, even though it has a 47% overall graduation rate and a Black graduation rate of just 17%.¹¹

VTAG Funds Received by Virginia Private Four Year Institutions (2019) and 6-year Graduation Rate (2019)

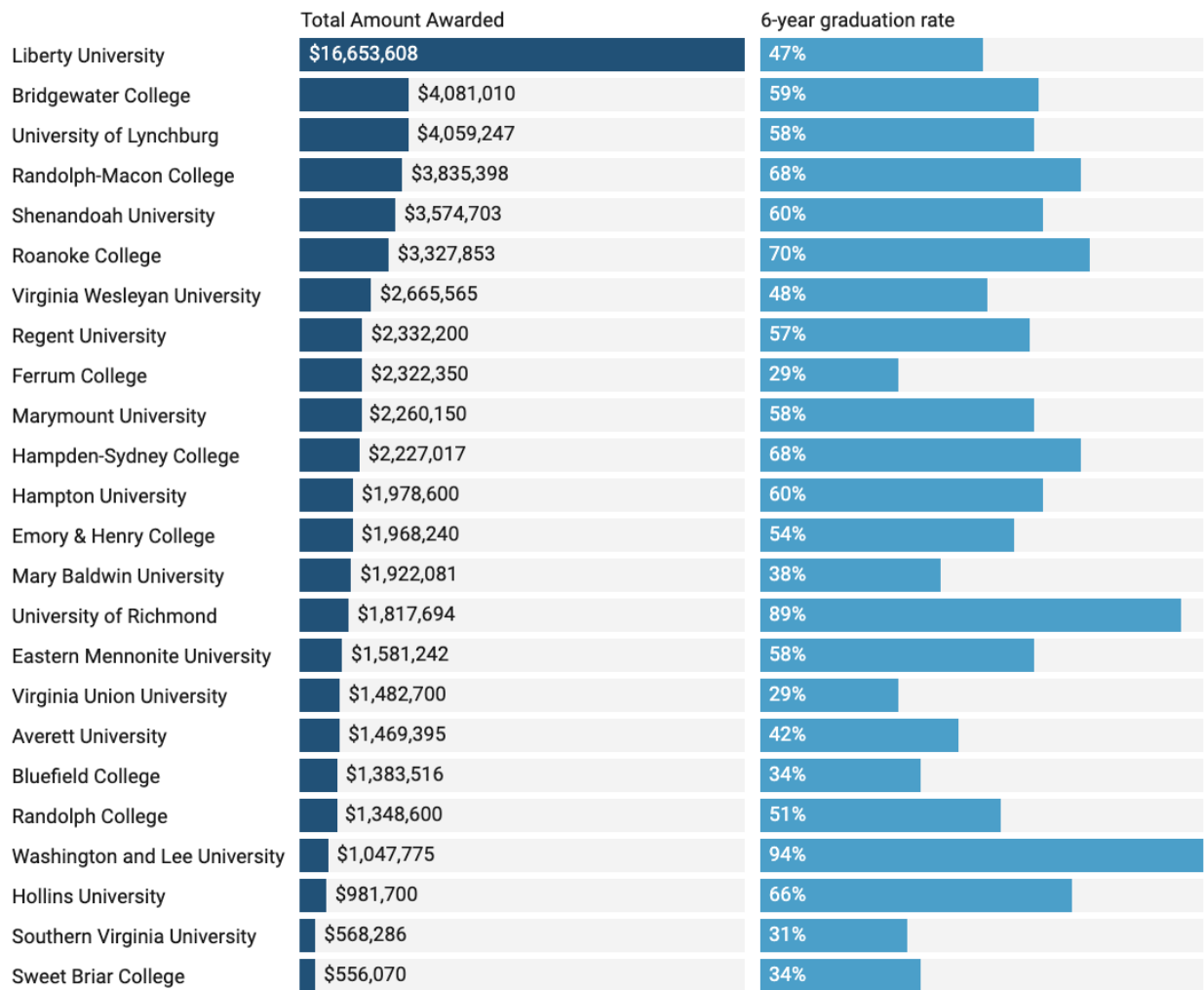


Chart: ERN • Source: IPEDS and SCHEV Table FA03: Tuition Assistance Grant (TAG), Award Totals • [Get the data](#) • Created with [Datawrapper](#)

Figure 6

Over 100,000 Virginia residents attending the Commonwealth’s public colleges received Pell Grants in 2018. Their average income was \$27,805. Their average Pell award was just \$4,309, leaving a large gap to cover the cost of attendance for many low-income students.¹² Virginia would do far more good if it used the \$70 million per year it spends on the VTAG on additional aid for students who receive Pell Grants.¹³

Virginia Has Increasingly Privatized Its Public Higher Education System

Redirecting VTAG aid to students with financial need is necessary, in part, because over the past two decades Virginia has followed a path of privatization when it comes to public college finance. As in many states, *per-student* higher education appropriations in Virginia have declined since their peak in 2001. Since 2012, the Commonwealth’s appropriations per FTE student at two- and four-year institutions combined have increased, but a wider lens reveals that they have dropped 24% in constant dollars since the start of the century. That decline is three times larger than the national average, which was 8% lower as compared to the level in 2001.¹⁴

In 2020, Virginia ranked 44th in state funding for two-year community colleges per FTE student and 36th in funding for higher education overall, despite being among the wealthiest states in the nation (see figures 7 & 8).¹⁵

Public Higher Education Appropriations Per FTE by State at Two-Year Institutions, FY 2020

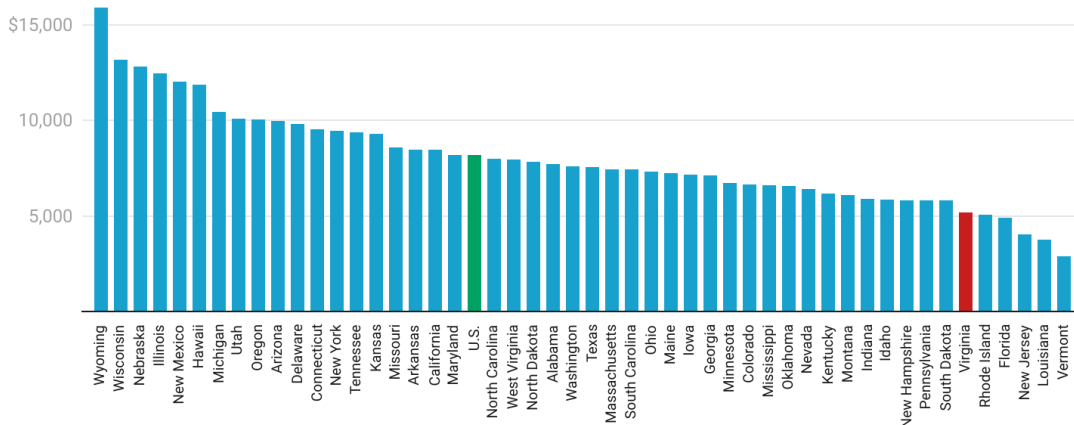


Chart: ERN • Source: SHEEO State Higher Education Finance • Created with Datawrapper

Figure 7

Public Higher Education Appropriations Per FTE by State, FY 2020

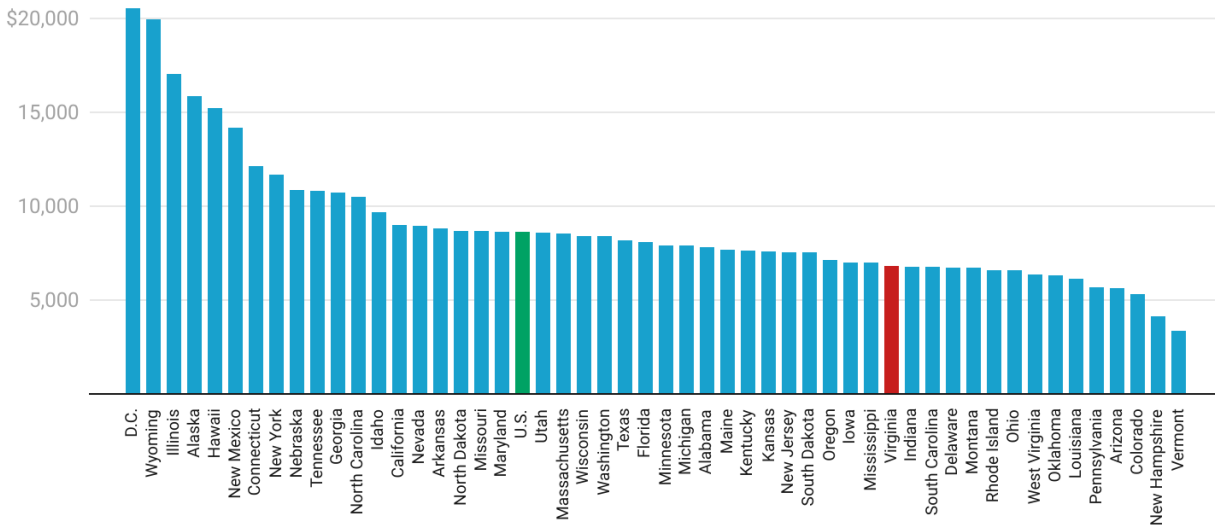


Chart: ERN • Source: SHEEO State Higher Education Finance • Created with Datawrapper

Figure 8

A 2012 report by the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission, commissioned by Virginia’s General Assembly, sounded the alarm about the price of college being passed on to students and families. The legislature responded by increasing appropriations to higher education.¹⁶ Despite this effort though, between 2009 and 2019, Virginia per-student appropriations for four-year institutions actually declined by 15% in constant dollars (see figure 9).¹⁷

State Appropriations per FTE at Four Year Institutions (2019 \$)

Source: IPEDS, adjusted to 2019 \$ using Consumer Price Index

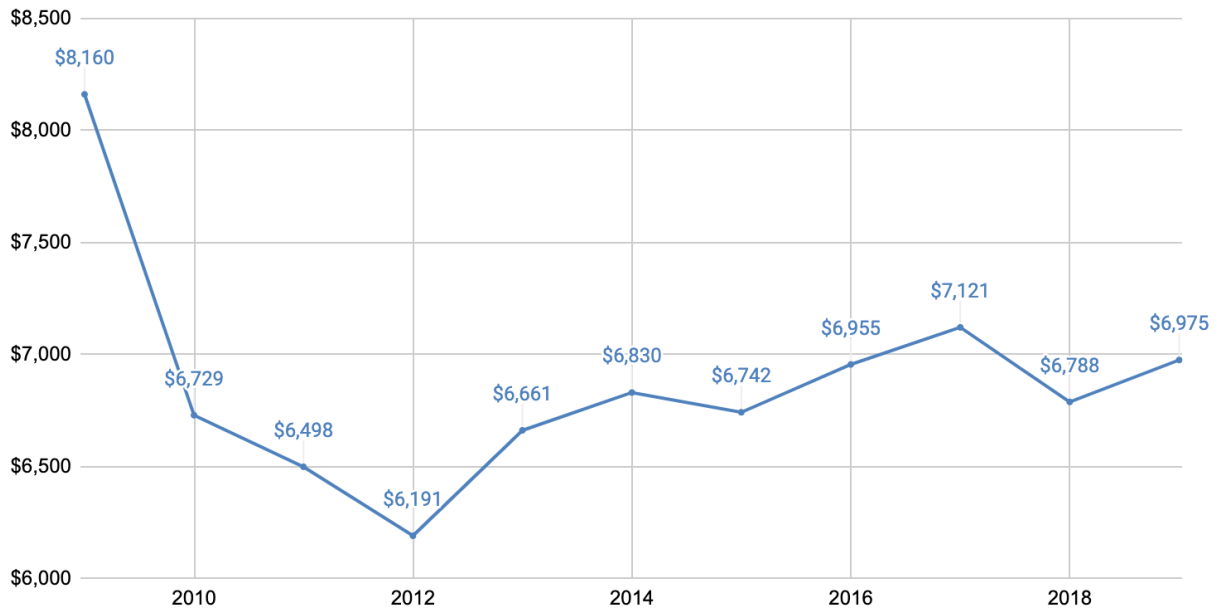


Figure 9

When public colleges are underfunded by states, they typically backfill a substantial portion of missing resources with heightened tuition and fees charged to families. In 2001, Virginia students paid just 23% of the cost of public higher education and the state paid 77%. In 2019, students covered 52% and the state just 48%.¹⁸ **Virginia's comprehensive public four-year colleges and research universities have the 3rd and 7th highest tuition and fee levels in the nation (see figure 10).**

Virginia’s Rank Among All States In-State Undergraduate Tuition and Fees at Public Institutions

Institution Category	1989-90	1993-94	2000-01	2009-10	2018-19	2019-20	Estimated 2020-21
Comprehensive Institutions	3rd	3rd	6th	10th	3rd	3rd	3rd
Doctoral/ Research Institutions	5th	8th	19th	16th	7th	7th	7th

Source: SCHEV 2020-21 Tuition and Fees Report

Figure 10

The University of Virginia (UVa) has the fifth highest in-state tuition and fee level in the nation for public flagships (see figure 11), despite its \$9.6 billion endowment (18th highest in the nation).¹⁹ On top of that endowment, UVa built a cash reserve of \$2.2 billion between 2007 and 2016—one former board member called it “a slush fund”—even as it raised tuition and fees. UVa deemed this reserve a Strategic Investment Fund, intended to propel improvements at the university, but it was not until 2020 that it finally provided \$30 million for the university’s scholarship endowment.²⁰ That sum represents less than 5% of the fund it has distributed across the university since 2016.²¹ Dedicating more of the Strategic Investment Fund to financial aid could make UVa one of the most affordable flagships in the nation, but the university appears to have the opposite priority.

In-State Tuition and Fees at Flagship Universities (2020)

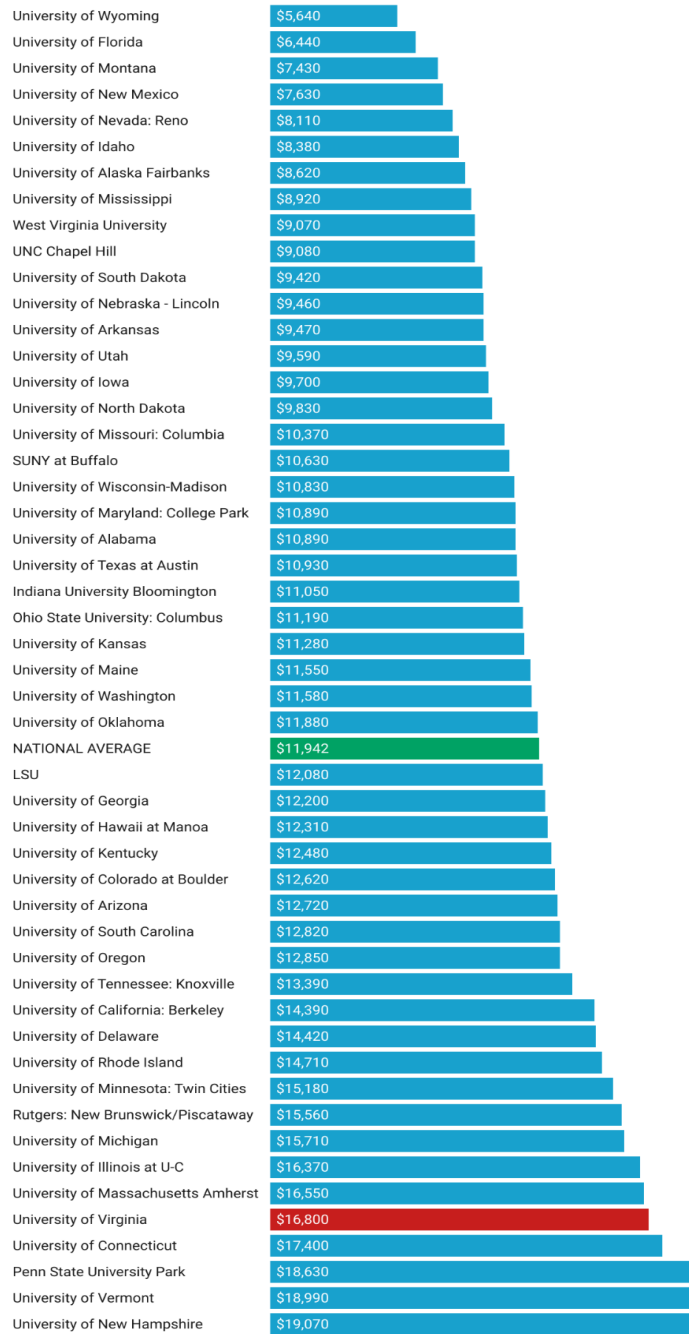


Chart: ERN • Source: College Board, Trends in College Pricing (2020) • Created with Datawrapper

Figure 11

Published tuition and fees do not tell the whole college affordability story, however. Federal and state grants along with institutional discounts mean that at most colleges and universities many students do not pay sticker price. Sticker prices matter since they can discourage students from even applying because they think that college is too expensive. But more significant than sticker price is the actual cost of attendance, or net price. Net price is the out-of-pocket price students pay for tuition, fees, books, food, and housing expenses after all grant aid and scholarships are subtracted from the published cost of attendance.²²

Over 1,200 first-time, full-time students from households with incomes below \$30,000 per year attend Christopher Newport, Virginia Commonwealth, George Mason, and Virginia State University. The average net price for these exceptionally low-income but promising students is over \$15,000 a year, or more than half of their annual household income. Each of these colleges charges low-income students substantially more than peer institutions (see figure 12).²³

Net Price for Low-Income Students

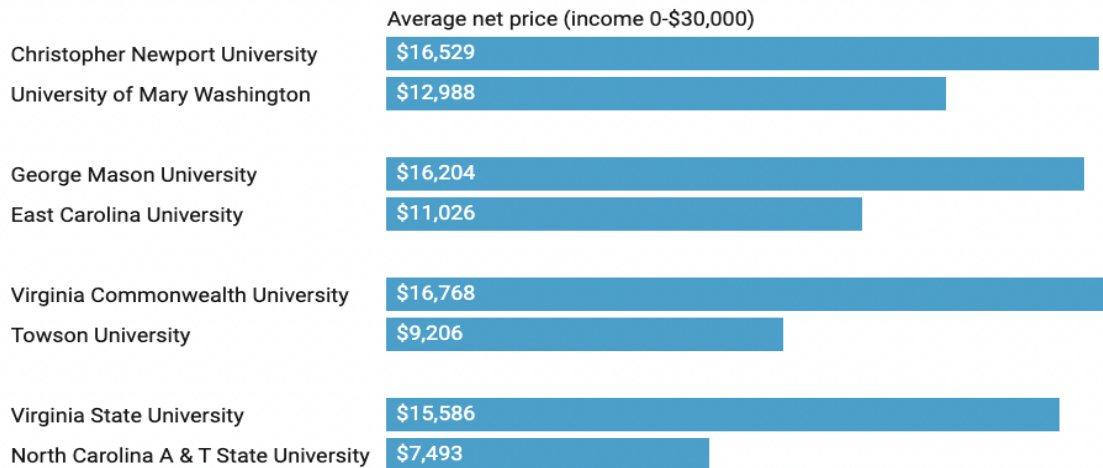
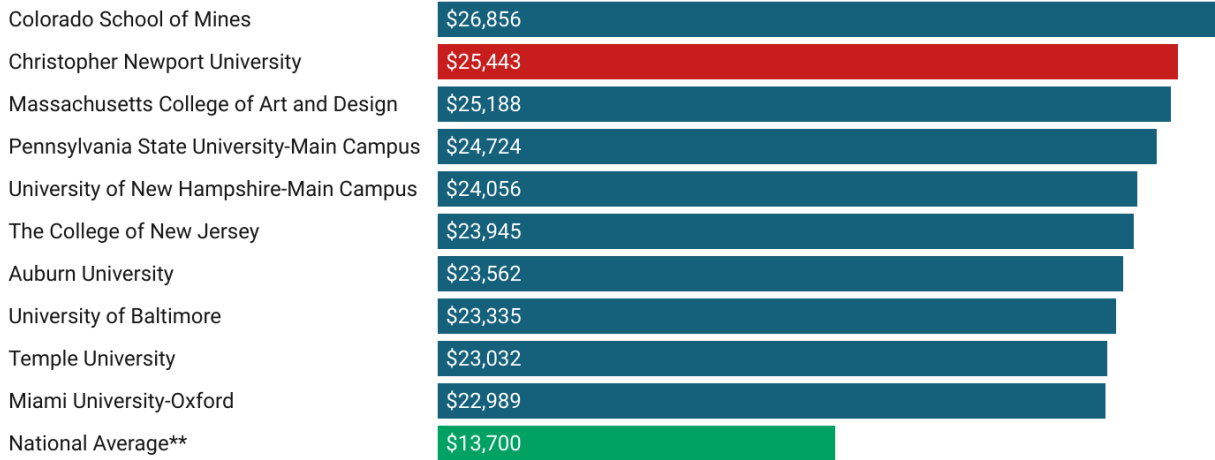


Chart: ERN • Source: IPEDS (2018-19) • Created with [Datawrapper](#)

Figure 12

Christopher Newport University (CNU) deserves special attention, if only for its connection to political clout. It's a public college located in U.S. House of Representatives Chairman Bobby Scott's Congressional District and its President is former U.S. Senator Paul Trible (R-VA). CNU has the second highest average net price of any public, four-year institution of higher education *in the nation* (see figure 13).²⁴ It has steadily increased its net price over the last decade; adjusted for inflation, CNU's net price has increased 37% (60% in unadjusted dollars). Today over a quarter of CNU students that graduate do so with over \$60,000 in student loan debt. Perhaps not coincidentally, from 2011 to 2018 its enrollment rate of students with Pell Grants shrank from 17% of undergraduates to 14%. The state average Pell Grant student enrollment rate at four-year public institutions grew slightly from 25.6% to 25.8% during this time.²⁵

The 10 Highest Net Prices per Year at 4-Year Public Colleges and Universities (2018)*



*Three public institutions identified in IPEDS with the highest net prices were left off this list because two of them, according to College Scorecard, are primarily 2-year institutions and the other has only been a public institution for one year. **National average for 2017 from NCES

Chart: ERN • Source: IPEDS, NCES • Created with Datawrapper

Figure 13

UVa's net price for students from households making less than \$30,000 is lower than Christopher Newport and many of its in-state peers', but low-income students pay even less at William & Mary and at other flagships with a national reputation (see figure 14).

Average Net Price for Low-Income and Working Class Students

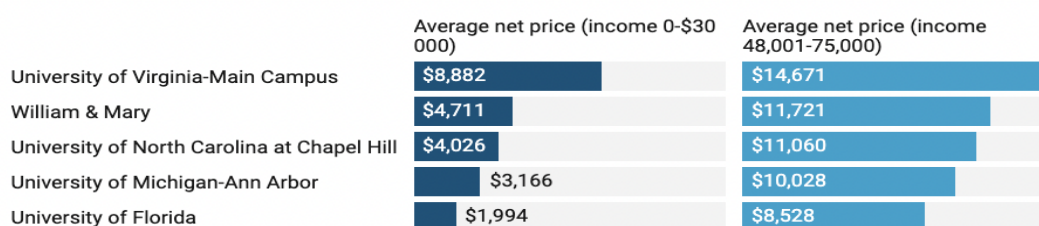


Chart: ERN • Source: IPEDS • [Get the data](#) • Created with [Datawrapper](#)

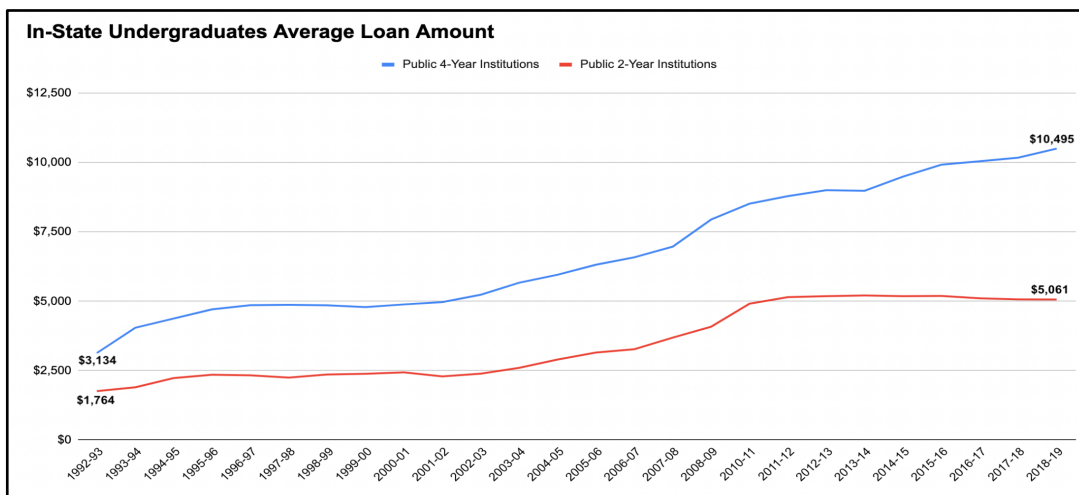
Figure 14

One should not rush to applaud William & Mary, however, on affordability for low-income students. Like UVa and Christopher Newport, it admits far too few low-income students. At Virginia Commonwealth University, 13% of freshmen come from households making less than \$30,000; at Virginia State, 28%. But at UVa, William & Mary, and Christopher Newport less than 4% of freshmen come from poor households. In fact, these three universities rank among the 11 worst public colleges in America when it comes to enrolling students with Pell Grants as noted in our first Virginia higher education brief. And no public official seems to hold these institutions accountable for that performance.

More College Students in Virginia Have to Borrow to Pay for College, and They Are Borrowing More Than Ever

Since 1992, the share of Virginia residents who need to take out loans to attend a public Virginia four-year college has grown from 29% to 51%. The amount borrowed on average increased from \$3,134 in 1992 (\$5,589 in 2018 dollars) to \$10,495 in 2018 (see figure 15). At private, Virginia four-year colleges, the share of students taking out loans grew from 40% to 70%, with a larger increase as well in the amount of borrowing in one year, from

\$3,860 in 1992 (\$6,884 in 2018 dollars) to \$11,264 in 2018. While the share of Virginia residents who borrow to attend a community college has been significantly smaller than at four-year public institutions, that proportion has increased more than five times, from 2.5% to 12.6% between 1992 and 2018. Make no mistake, Virginia’s student loan crisis is in large part a function of state disinvestment in higher education.



Source: SCHEV Table FA33T: Trends in the Percentage of Students Enrolled in the Fall who Borrowed

Figure 15

From 2002 to 2018, the share of students graduating from Virginia’s public universities with debt increased by 24% and the amount of debt they had increased by 18% (see figure 16). Worse yet, the debt of big student loan borrowers (i.e., the highest quartile that owe over \$50,000) grew by 49% during that same time period. The dollar amounts and shares are higher yet at four-year private universities.²⁶ And it is important to note that these numbers are only for college graduates, who at least enjoy the financial benefits of a degree, unlike the thousands of students leaving college with debt and no degree.

Trends in Student Debt at Virginia 4-year Universities and Colleges

All dollar amounts converted to 2018 \$, using Consumer Price Index

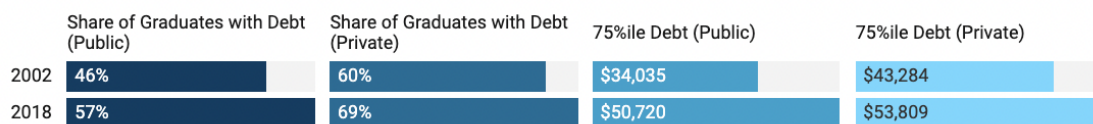


Chart: ERN • Source: SCHEV Table EOM 01T • [Get the data](#) • Created with [Datawrapper](#)

Figure 16

There are vast differences in the proportion of students who graduate from Virginia’s public universities with debt and in how much debt they possess (see figure 17). At Christopher Newport and James Madison University, a quarter of graduates leave owing more than \$60,000 in student loan debt. At Longwood University, a quarter of graduates owe more than \$70,000 in student loan debt. Students of color who graduated from four-year colleges in Virginia are more likely to have debt than white graduates are (64% to 54%, respectively), and their median debt levels are about \$1,500 higher.²⁷

Student Debt at Virginia 4-year Public Universities (2018)

All data are for graduates of 4-year Bachelor's degree programs.

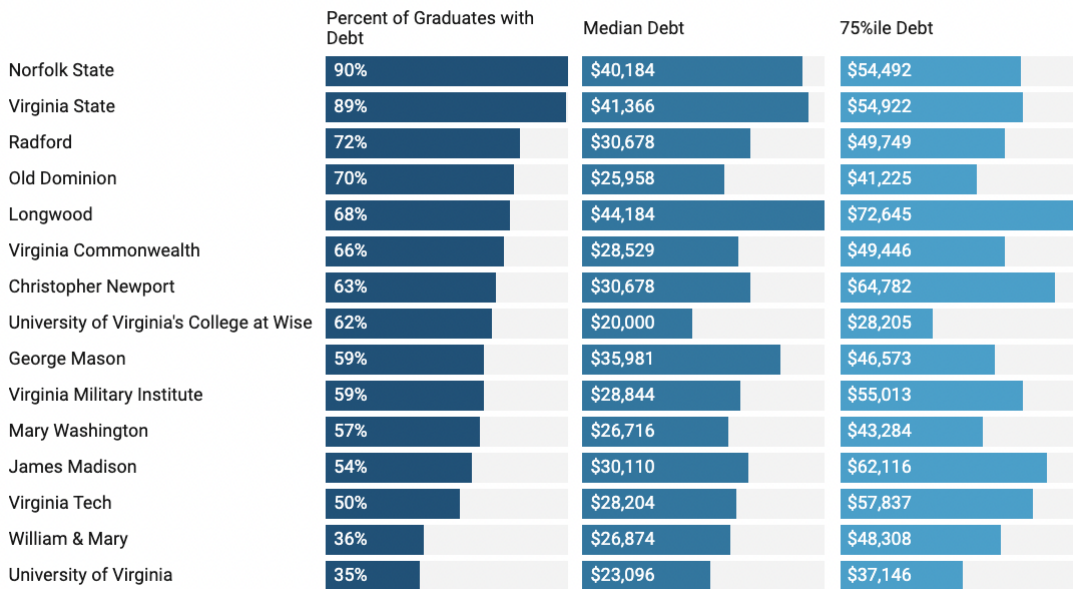


Chart: ERN • Source: SCHEV Table EOM 01T • [Get the data](#) • Created with [Datawrapper](#)

Figure 17

A notably smaller share of students graduate with debt from Virginia’s two most selective and wealthiest public universities, and their debt loads are smaller on average, particularly at UVa. But again before we commend William & Mary or UVa for their seeming affordability, recall they enroll smaller shares of Pell Grant recipients than almost every other public college and university in the nation. They look relatively affordable compared to other Virginia colleges in terms of median student loan debt,

in part, because they accept relatively few students who need to borrow money for college.

In stark contrast, almost every graduate from the state’s two public Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Norfolk State and Virginia State, leaves with debt, and a quarter of graduates owed more than \$54,000 in 2018 (see figure 17).²⁸ The ubiquity and size of student loan debt for Black students and at HBCUs is of particular concern. For reasons ranging from societal discrimination in employment and earnings to the racial wealth gap and occupational choice, national data indicates some 49% of Black student loan borrowers default on a student loan at least once over a 12 year repayment period and some 23% of Black *bachelor degree* holders default on student loan at least once during the same period of time—a rate four times higher than their white peers (see figure 18).²⁹ In short, student loan debt at public two- and four-year colleges is worsening racial inequity.

Borrower Loan Default Rate within 12 Years after Entry (Students entered in 2003-04)

	Overall	Attained Bachelor’s Degree	Attained Associate Degree	Attained Certificate	No Degree, Still Enrolled	Dropped Out
White	21%	6%	17%	40%	23%	38%
Black/AA	49%	23%	33%	54%	46%	65%
Hispanic/Latinx	36%	14%	21%	51%	30%	48%
Overall	29%	9%	22%	46%	29%	46%

Source: Center for American Progress, 2017.

Figure 18

CONCLUSION

In our last brief on Virginia higher education, we highlighted Virginia's *de facto* segregated system by class and race. This brief follows on that because affordability contributes to inequity in access and outcomes. It is not enough simply to recruit a diverse pool of applicants. Colleges and universities must be affordable as well in order to make a meaningful commitment to diversity.

Virginia has failed to answer the charge Thomas Jefferson called it to over two centuries ago: to create an educated populace "without regard to wealth, birth or other accidental condition or circumstance." It was a noble challenge then and one that Virginia can and should still fulfill, for its own good and the good of families with students of all ages.

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ENDNOTES

¹ “79. A Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge, 18 June 1779,” Founders Online, National Archives.

² For endowment data, see James Murphy, “Rich Schools, Poor Recruiters,” Education Reform Now (February 2021). State funding figures based on analysis of IPEDS data for sources of revenue in 2018.

³ Average Pell share and Black student share calculated from an analysis of IPEDS enrollment data for 2016-18.

⁴ State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, Pathways to Opportunity: The Virginia Plan for Higher Education (2020).

⁵ See Virginia code, Title 23.1.

⁶ The average award totals are for undergraduates attending two- or four-year public institutions in 2018-19, the most recent year for which data are available from the State Council of Higher Education of Virginia (SCHEV). See Table FA13: VA Student Financial Assistance Program Report for the average award to students attending public institutions. SCHEV does not report separate average award amounts for the Commonwealth and VGAP programs.

⁷ Share calculated from the sum of all undergraduate Tuition Assistance Grants in 2018-19 found in Table: FA03: Tuition Assistance Grant (TAG), Award Totals, SCHEV.

⁸ The average award totals are for undergraduates attending two- or four-year public institutions in 2018-19, the most recent year for which data are available from the State Council of Higher Education of Virginia (SCHEV). See Table FA13: VA Student Financial Assistance Program Report for the average award to students attending public institutions and Table: FA03: Tuition Assistance Grant (TAG), Award Totals for awards to students at private institutions

⁹ Students with financial need, as defined by the federal government, are those whose expected family contribution, determined by completing the FAFSA, is lower than a university’s cost of attendance.

¹⁰ A few institutions for which graduation rates were not available in IPEDS were left off the table.

¹¹ Graduation rates based on an analysis of 2019 IPEDS enrollment data.

¹² See SCHEV table FA09: Pell Grant Report: 2018-19.

¹³ Total derived from sum of all undergraduate Tuition Assistance Grants in 2018-19 found in SCHEV Table: FA03: Tuition Assistance Grant (TAG), Award Totals.

¹⁴ State Higher Education Executive Officers Association, State Profile: Virginia, State Higher Education Finance (SHEF) Report (2020).

¹⁵ SHEF Report (2020), see figure 3.2. Alaska does not have community colleges, so Virginia is ranked 44th out of 49 states.

¹⁶ Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission, Addressing the Cost of Public Higher Education in Virginia (2012).

¹⁷ IPEDS data. All dollar amounts adjusted to \$2019, using the Consumer Price Index.

¹⁸ See chart 7 in SCHEV’s Higher Education Funding: Baselines and Trends in Education and General Support (2020) report.

¹⁹ <https://www.cavalierdaily.com/article/2020/12/ucwva-the-university-has-the-money>

²⁰ Nick Anderson, Susan Svrluga, and Danielle Douglas-Gabriel, “Lawmakers want to know why U-Va. stockpiled billions but still boosted tuition,” *Washington Post*, August 25, 2016.

²¹ James Bacon, “UVA Builds Scholarship Endowment to Half-Billion Dollars,” *Bacon’s Rebellion*, December 13, 2020. As of 2019, the Strategic Initiative Fund had provided approximately \$640 million in funding to programs at UVA.

²² Net prices are calculated using only those students who apply for federal financial aid. Net price figures therefore leave out some students. A number of these students--particularly at expensive private colleges and universities, such as Washington and Lee University and the University of Richmond--will be wealthy enough to simply pay the full or discounted sticker price and thus qualify for no grants and take out no federal loans, which results in net prices that are actually significantly lower than the average price paid to attend. According to the Department of Education’s College Scorecard, only 23% of students at Washington and Lee receive federal loans, even though the published cost of attendance there is over \$70,000.

²³ Data for 2018-19 taken from IPEDS. IPEDS reports net price and headcount by income for first-time, full-time students only. There are almost certainly thousands more continuing students from this income bracket enrolled at these four universities. Peer institutions were chosen based on region and similar academic profiles as derived from College Results Online.

²⁴ Based on an analysis of IPEDS data.

²⁵ Based on an analysis of single year undergraduate headcounts in IPEDS.

²⁶ Data from SCHEV Table EOM 01T: Debt Profile: Total Loans 5 Years and includes private and federal Student loans and PLUS loans.

²⁷ See SCHEV Table EOM 04: Debt Profile: Student Loans by Race 5 Years.

²⁸ See SCHEV Table EOM 04: Debt Profile: Student Loans by Race 5 Years.

²⁹ Ben Miller, “New Federal Data Show a Student Loan Crisis for African American Borrowers,” Center for American Progress (2017).



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